

## A. PRIORITY ACTIONS

It is evident from the list of actions described in Chapter 5, that the implementation of the Open Space Plan will be a long-term effort on the part of the City. However, that effort needs to begin with a few meaningful steps. At the Open Space Summit, participants were asked to identify the three actions that they considered to be top priorities for the City to accomplish in the short-term. The Open Space Steering Committee took these responses into account when developing the list of priority actions for the City to undertake first in its implementation of the Plan. As a result of this process, the following eleven priorities were identified (in no specific order):

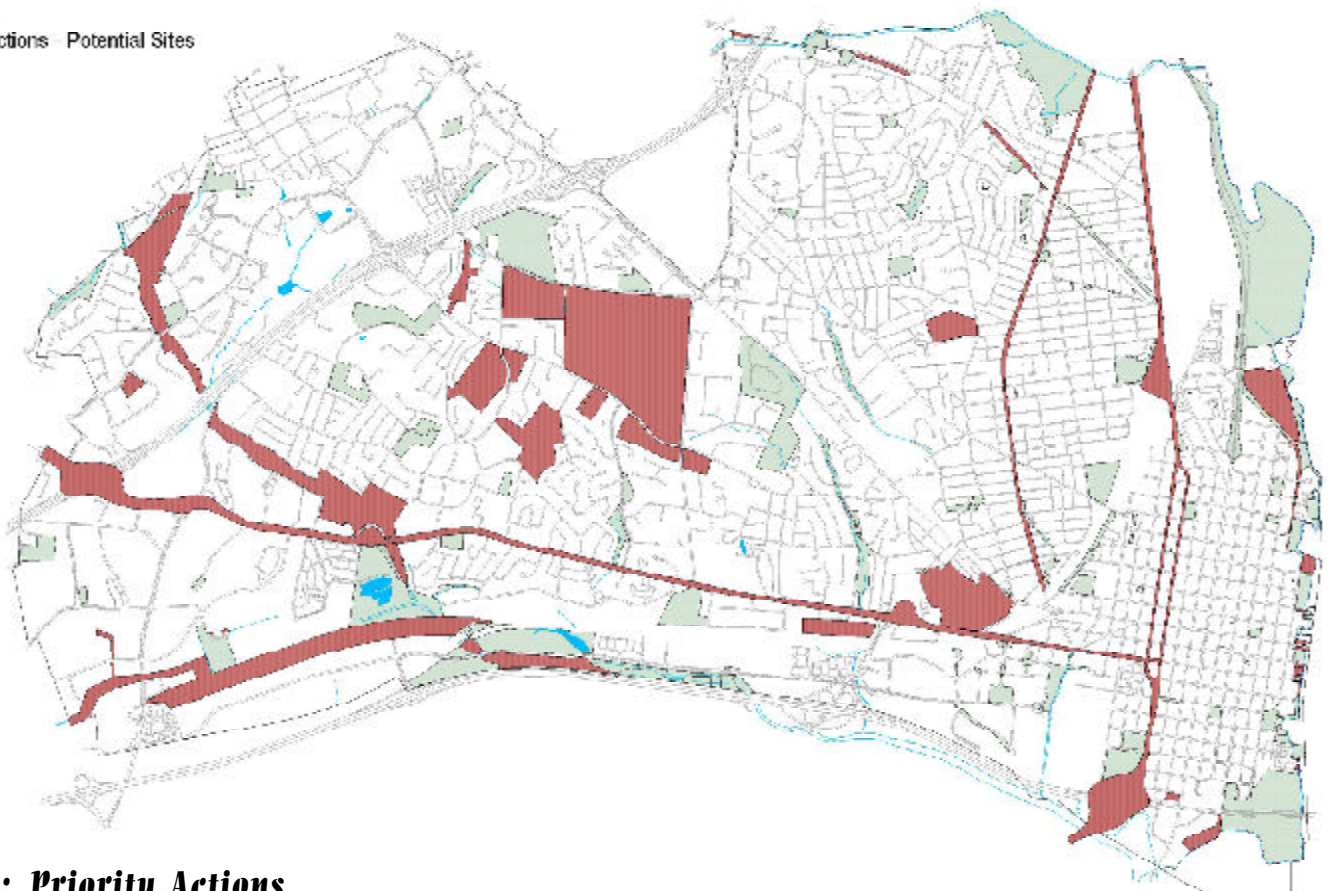
- **Work with the community to *create the Alexandria Open Space Conservancy***
- **Employ a full-time, professional grants writer to pursue public and private sector funding for open space and trails related activities. It is possible that this position could be shared between the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES).**
- **Work actively to achieve settlement on the following properties in order to *begin completion of the Alexandria Waterfront Plan*:**
  - 1 and 2 King Street
  - 0 Prince Street
- **The Departments of Parks and Recreation, T&ES, and Planning and Zoning should collaborate in the *preparation of a Greenway Management Plan for the Holmes Run Stream Valley* to serve as a model for other stream valley plans. This should be developed in conjunction with the proposed Watershed Management Plan to be undertaken by T&ES, as well as the planning project for Four Mile Run being carried out in conjunction with Arlington County.**
  - This plan should address the protection and enhancement of open space, as well as issues of acquisition/easements, rehabilitation, and interpretation of the full range of site resources.
  - Once the Greenway Management Plan model is established, plans should be undertaken for the city's remaining stream valleys, as listed in the Open Space Plan (i.e., Cameron Run, Holmes Run, Taylor Run, etc.).
- **Focus on *RPA protection and enhancement*:**
  - Do not allow encroachments in the RPA buffers
  - Focus on vacant land immediately adjacent to RPA's for protection
  - Focus on RPA's for environmental restoration
- ***Strongly consider the following properties for easements, acquisition, or other methods of open space preservation within the short term.***

These sites are critical to achieving the goals of the open space plan:  
(Note: Specific addresses will be added, where applicable)

- Episcopal High School west tract (at Braddock Road and North Howard Street, south to Maple Tree Court and east to approximately Marlboro Drive)
- Second Presbyterian Church site (at Janney's and Quaker Lanes)
- Series of open spaces east of Seminary Plaza and Library Lane, between Braddock and Seminary Roads
- Land in the southwest quadrant at the intersection of North Beauregard and Armistead Streets
- Multiple small linear sites on the south side of East and West Glebe Roads, between Route 1 and I-395, that would allow for the creation of a linear park in the Del Ray area
- Multiple sites, west of Holmes Run, north of Eisenhower Avenue between Clermont Avenue and Burnside Place (west of Van Dorn Street)
- A site to the west of Telegraph Road between Longview Drive and the railroad right-of-way
- As much as possible of the power plant site at the north end of Old Town (at Slaters Lane, east of the George Washington Memorial Parkway) as the plant's operations become reconfigured over time
- Exxon/Mobil-Freedmen's Cemetery site at South Washington and Church Streets

#### Legend

Priority Actions Potential Sites  
Parks



**Figure 31: Priority Actions**

- ***Revise the City's existing zoning requirements*** to achieve better open space in new developments.
- ***Consider the open space opportunities east of Simpson Field*** for the creation of active recreational facilities.
- The Open Space Conservancy should, as one of its initial tasks, work with the Episcopal Church, the George Washington Masonic Memorial, and possibly other large institutional landholders, to ***develop a workable Open Space Conservation Strategy for institutional land*** within the Episcopal High School, the Theological Seminary, St. Agnes and St. Stephens Schools, and Masonic Memorial properties.
- ***Rehabilitate Commonwealth Avenue*** as a significant parkway and model for future parkways in the City. Rehabilitation tasks would include:
  - Clearing of dead/diseased vegetation, replacement and infill with new vegetation, replanting of median strips and extension of medians where feasible, and on-going maintenance activities.
- ***Implement the following new path/trail linkages:***
  - A new stream crossing of Holmes Run at Chambliss Street to connect neighborhoods to the north and south of Holmes Run. This route will also provide a safe, non-motorized commuter connection and will link to the proposed Fairfax County path to Columbia Pike as well as the Holmes Run trail. (Note: the City is about to begin a design feasibility study on this trail)
  - An off-street path through the eastern end of Eisenhower Valley to connect the off-street Eisenhower Valley path (which ends at Telegraph Road) to the streets of Old Town at Payne Street.
  - A multi-use path from Booth Park (west end of Cameron Station) to the Fairfax County line, along Backlick Run. Also, work with Fairfax County to extend this to the west. This project would allow for the reclamation of Backlick Run.
- ***Establish a streetscape and gateway enhancement program for Route 1*** through the City.
  - Once this program has been completed, carry out a similar program for the Duke Street corridor.
- ***Implement a CITYgreen analysis***<sup>1</sup> to assess the amount of tree cover currently in the City. Define a legally enforceable strategy for protecting existing tree cover, preventing substantial reduction to this tree cover, and enhancing the tree cover throughout the City.

### B. FUNDING SOURCES AND STRATEGIES

This section addresses various funding mechanisms related to implementation

of the Alexandria Open Space Plan. The discussion is organized around four general categories:

- 1. *Organization for Fundraising and Stewardship***
- 2. *Funding for Acquisition and Development***
- 3. *Funding for Operations***
- 4. *Use of Public and Institutional Grants***

It should be noted that while individual approaches to funding are identified in terms of one of these four categories, there is often overlap among categories with regard to specific implementation strategies that the City might wish to adopt.

The funding strategies described below can be applied, at different levels, to each of the goals set forth in the Open Space Plan, as presented in Chapter 5 of this report. Therefore, accompanying the discussion of each funding option is a listing of those goals to which these options are most applicable. This arrangement should assist the City of Alexandria in developing an open space strategy that achieves the open space goals that it has defined, within a realistic time frame.

The funding strategy is an important element of the open space plan, because it seeks to identify a variety of tools that can provide sustainable, practical funding support for protecting, expanding and promoting Alexandria's open space resources. Currently, the City uses some tools, such as proffers, and in one instance, land use assessment abatement techniques, to fund open space land acquisition. It uses other tools, such as a volunteer program to provide operational support. The tools discussed below will expand these current efforts.

• ***ORGANIZATION FOR FUNDRAISING AND STEWARDSHIP***

***Applicable Goals: 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15***

One of the lessons learned from the study of successful open space and land preservation efforts elsewhere is the need for a strong advocacy/support group. Examples abound. At the national level, the Nature Conservancy performs this function, and at the regional level, the Potomac Conservancy is active. Functions can include education, lobbying, funding support to others, direct funding of land and easement acquisitions, holding title to open space properties, as well as operational support. For the Alexandria Open Space Plan, the creation of a locally focused Open Space Conservancy is a key recommendation.

Typically such a group is established as a 501(c)(3) not-for profit organization, which enables it to engage in extensive fundraising efforts. In this way, the 501(c)(3) advocacy/support group can act as an intermediary between donors and government. Contributors do not feel that they are giving their

money to the government per se, but to a benevolent organization, and they often have a higher level of confidence that their funds will be protected and used in the manner intended. In addition, donations of either land or cash are tax deductible to the donor.

While some advocacy/support groups limit themselves to fundraising, education and non-operational activities, other groups, which are typically “friends” groups, take more active roles in operations. Involvement can include input on management and staffing decisions, participation in concessions and programs, and/or management responsibility for specific facilities or services.

For the City of Alexandria, the Historic Alexandria Foundation can serve as a model for what can be accomplished by a strong support/advocacy group. The Foundation has been active in protecting and preserving the city’s historic resources. It partners with individual residents and corporate citizens, raises funds, and is a funding source for small grants (typically between \$2,000 and \$5,000 annually). It educates, facilitates, and coordinates.

Elsewhere in Northern Virginia, the private Potomac Conservancy and the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust perform many of the same functions as the Historic Alexandria Foundation. These kinds of functions are critical to the successful implementation of the Open Space Plan and may best be performed by an Alexandria Open Space Conservancy dedicated to open space preservation within the Alexandria community. Such an entity may need to partner, from time to time, with other groups (e.g., the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust) when the need arises.

#### • *FUNDING FOR ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT*

*Applicable Goals: 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10*

This section outlines funding mechanisms for the expansion of existing open space and developing new open space opportunities. Acquisition and development of open space may involve dedicated funding, other city funding mechanisms, balanced development schemes, and/or the purchase of easements on available property. In addition to their usefulness as tools for acquisition and development, these funding strategies may also be useful for preservation and maintenance purposes.

#### *Dedicated Trusts and Funds*

One characteristic of successful programs dealing with open space land acquisition is the presence of a dedicated structure that serves to protect incoming funds and to ensure that monies go for the specified use(s), such as land acquisition, open space recreation, natural resource protection, cultural/historic open space resource protection or other uses identified in this plan. Types of organizational structures include land banks, land trusts, or land preservation funds. Names are less important than the functions they provide,



and their (perceived) independence from government. Several local jurisdictions have established dedicated structures for collecting and dispersing funds for open space land acquisition. Based on these successful models and other models within the City and elsewhere, the City of Alexandria should consider the establishment of a dedicated open space fund to support many of the goals set forth in the open space plan.

Alexandria-based and other local examples of dedicated structures and funding mechanisms include the following:

**Land Trust** – The Fairfax County Park Authority Land Trust is a dedicated fund into which residents and community interests can make voluntary donations intended for the purposes of land acquisition. Initially, the fund received limited promotional support and, consequently, its success was also limited. As of June 2001, the trust fund had received \$130,000 in donations. Subsequent to that date, a full time director was hired and the expectations for much stronger fundraising are high.

**Conservation Fund** – The Fairfax City Open Space Conservation Fund is a dedicated fund for land acquisition that has been established by the City of Fairfax. It provides for an increase in the local real property tax rate on residential and commercial properties, of up to \$.05 per \$100 of assessed valuation. There is a five-year term limit. Voter support was high in the non-binding referendum that passed by a 2-1 margin. For the current year, the incremental tax rate has been set at \$.03 per \$100, and it is anticipated that receipts for the year will total some \$1 million. An equivalent tax of \$.03 per \$100 applied to residential and commercial property in Alexandria could generate almost \$5 million.

A similar funding model for the open space plan could involve the dedication of a portion of other taxes to the purchase of open space property. An option that was initiated by and endorsed by the Alexandria City Council is the implementation of a local Recordation Tax. This increased tax would require approval from the Virginia General Assembly which, in the past, has been reluctant to pass the necessary legislation. However, for the current year, the assembly has agreed to include this funding mechanism in a study of funding issues. Elsewhere in Northern Virginia, the Town of Vienna has been considering an increase in the local meals (restaurant) tax for a set number of years to fund the purchase of land for a new park.

**Historic Alexandria Preservation Fund** - A precedent for a dedicated fund already exists in Alexandria in the form of the Historic Alexandria Preservation Fund of the Historic Alexandria Foundation. Resources in this fund are generated through the Foundation's annual antiques sale. A total of \$5,000 is used annually to support the successful grants program of the organization.

**Local Service District –** The Code of Virginia (15.2-2400) permits localities to establish service districts for the purposes of providing enhanced services and/or facilities. Districts typically focus on transportation services, fire services, or sewer and water services. They are funded by a special property tax surcharge. In Northern Virginia, special service districts are used to support facilities such as the Reston and McLean Community Centers. Legislation was recently passed to allow the establishment of service districts for the purpose of purchasing land and maintaining open space areas.

**Open Space Fund (developer fees) –** A program providing for developer fees and contributions can be established that would be dedicated to funding the acquisition and development of additional open space. Many communities have been successful in implementing this source of funding. Individual development sites are often not large enough, or are inappropriately located, to supply valuable open space for public use and enjoyment. Hence, a developer fee, either in lieu of, or in addition to, the provision of on-site open space would add to other funds, and would make purchases and development of desirable sites possible.

### ***Other Funding Mechanisms***

#### **1. Bonds:**

- ***General Obligation Bonds*** – General Obligation bonds are instruments of local government capital finance. The government sells the bonds to raise funds, and then pays back the principal and interest on the bonds after a period of time has elapsed, usually 20 to 30 years. Bonds are often used to fund parks and open space projects. Depending on state or local law, bonds either require voter approval (such as in most Virginia counties) or city council authorization (such as in Alexandria and most Virginia cities.) For example, the 1998 Fairfax County Bond issue, which was supported by over 70 percent of the voters, included some \$20 million out of a total of \$75 million for land acquisition. Arlington County schedules a bond referendum package every two years and always includes proposals for parks bond funding. Arlington voters have approved these bond issues by substantial margins in all but one instance over the past two decades.
- ***Revenue Bonds*** – Unlike General Obligation bonds, capital improvement bonds (such as revenue bonds) are not subject to levy limits and require only a public hearing, not a referendum. However, revenue bonds are typically used only on projects specifically included in a capital improvement plan, and when a dedicated source of funding is identified as the source of repayment. Dedicated funding sources can include certain taxes, utility fees, and other fees and revenue streams.

**Examples:**

- In Virginia, transportation revenue bonds have been issued using part of the existing state recordation tax as a revenue source.
- In 1998, Austin (Texas) citizens voted to apportion part of their rising property tax coffers to acquiring more open space. Citizens approved a \$40.45 million bond offering to be repaid over 30 years. Thus far, 500 acres of open space have been purchased with the bond money.

**2. Taxes and General Fund Money:**

- **Property Taxes** – In Virginia, local governing bodies can approve an increase in the local property tax rate to finance a bond issue or to provide cash for open space acquisition, create a community-managed open space trust fund, or pay for a specific open space purchase. Typically, the increases can range from 1 to 2 cents on every \$100 of assessed valuation. The City of Fairfax advisory referendum mentioned above and subsequent Fairfax City Council action present a good example of how a community-supported increase in property taxes can be utilized for the acquisition of open space.
- **Sales Taxes** – In some communities, the local sales tax rate has been increased to finance bonds for open space acquisition, create a trust fund, or pay for the acquisition of a specific piece of property. This approach is typically very beneficial for cities. Large sums of money can be generated from a very small tax increase on purchased goods and, in many cases, a large proportion of a city's retail sales typically comes from non-residents and visitors who end up paying for a share of the city's open space acquisition projects. In Virginia, the extension of the sales tax would require approval from the general assembly. In the immediate future, transportation and education capital projects are likely to be the only candidates for sales tax increase; however, if a sales tax increase is approved for education and/or transportation, it will make it easier financially for open space acquisition projects to be included in Alexandria's Capital Improvement Program.
- **General Fund Support** – A community may also choose not to raise tax rates, per se, when financing a bond or providing funds for direct purchase for open space land. In the 1990's, many governments used General Fund surpluses to support such initiatives. The City of Alexandria's large annual contribution to capital reserves from the General Fund (\$14 million is proposed in FY 2003) is a good example of this reallocation.

**Easements**

A tool that is growing in acceptance by non profit organizations and govern-



ments is the conservation easement. A conservation easement is a legally recorded agreement by which landowners may voluntarily restrict the use of their land. Provided that certain conditions are met, donors of easements may be eligible for certain income, estate, and property tax benefits. The income and estate tax benefits can be substantial, while the property tax benefits may or may not be substantial, depending largely on the relinquishment of development rights.

To gain preferential tax treatment, the land to be protected must often provide a recognizable public benefit, such as protecting rare species, public water supplies, or scenic vistas visible from roads. Public access is not necessarily a requirement. Although the duration of a conservation easement can vary depending on the desires of the landowner, tax benefits generally are available only for perpetual easements. A landowner that conveys a conservation easement retains all rights to use the land for any purposes that do not interfere with the preservation of the property as stated in the terms of the easement.

In 2002, the Commonwealth of Virginia enacted new legislation that will allow landowners who provide substantial easements to “sell,” or transfer for cash, the value of the resulting tax deduction, provided that their income is too low to benefit from the deduction. This significant legislation will mean that landowners on fixed, or other limited, incomes who could not formerly take advantage of the tax credit incentive would be able to obtain cash in lieu of this credit. The law was also changed to allow a minimum of one-quarter acre (versus the one acre previously required) to be eligible for conservation easement tax credits.

***Examples:***

- Fairfax County’s land acquisition plan involves approaching owners about putting easements on their property. Since 2000, 241 acres have been protected through easements.
- The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust has been working with private landowners in Fairfax, Loudoun and Arlington Counties, as well as recently in the City of Alexandria, to secure conservation easements. Successes include a 12-acre residential parcel in Great Falls and a wooded 13-acre parcel near Waterford.
- In Alexandria, this approach was recently used to secure Civil War era fortifications and adjacent open space at Battery Heights.

The use of conservation easements will be an excellent tool in making the linkages/connections recommended in the Open Space Plan, in order to achieve a continuous open space system within the city, and the use of easements will supplement implementation of the Potomac River Waterfront Plan.

Working with landowners and development attorneys to secure conservation easements will be an important part of the overall strategy for preserving

Alexandria's open space. Much of the effort here will be locating willing landowners and educating them about the benefits of this action. A key part of the strategy will be to position the City so that it has the Right of First Refusal on large parcels of land and other critical properties, as they become available.

The purchase of easements, rather than voluntary conveyances has also been a viable preservation tool in the past. However, this approach is subject to the ups and downs of economic cycles, and in the near term, may be somewhat more difficult given the current economic climate. Availability of funding through private and institutional sources has been adversely impacted by the recent performance of the stock market, and one important source of public funds has been curtailed. In the latter case, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (V.O.F.), the state-sponsored vehicle for the purchase of easements for large expanses of land, was de-funded in 2001. (Also, it should be noted that Alexandria has not established a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, so the V.O.F. reports that the City is unlikely to benefit from V.O.F. programs even when funding is available.)

### ***Balanced Development***

Balanced development can be loosely defined as financing the preservation of open space by developing only a portion of the property in question. Normally, balanced development initiatives are undertaken when a desirable tract of land becomes available on the open market. The balanced development approach allows the government to guide the development of the property and ensure the enhanced and continuing value of the property in question, as well as surrounding properties.

Often, because of the economic highest and best use valuation, local government cannot financially or technically compete with the private sector when it comes to bidding for new land. The balanced development approach makes competition with the private sector easier for local government, by enlisting a third party entity to purchase the land for it. The third party then resells its land to the different entities involved. It may sell 20 percent of the land to an interested developer and the remaining 80 percent to the government. Because the third party is often a non-profit group or a conglomeration of local business, citizens, and environmental groups, the governmental entity is charged little for its portion of the land. In this way, a large percentage of the open space is preserved at a reduced cost to the public. However, this approach requires a private entity with significant financial capabilities.

Within the City of Alexandria, the balanced development approach might be most applicable in areas such as Eisenhower Valley, where substantial new development is likely to occur and where preservation of open space as part of the development planning process will help preserve and enhance the city's "last remaining open space frontier."

- **FUNDING FOR OPERATIONS**

***Applicable Goals: 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12***

This section presents examples of funding mechanisms that can offset the operational costs of parks and open space. Most of the programs below aid in the maintenance/preservation/restoration of open space – a focus of the above goals.

***Volunteer Programs***

Volunteer programs have been used successfully to reduce budgetary requirements, enhance parks system operations, and generate a base of support for private contributions. Specific examples of volunteer applications include docent living history activities, security, gardening and landscaping, event registrations, and so forth. As a mechanism for preserving, protecting, and expanding open space in Alexandria, volunteer groups can organize as friends groups or be managed by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. They can help with environmental clean-up activities, education awareness, administrative work, and other activities.

The Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities has already experienced success with the use of volunteers. However, by placing greater emphasis on volunteer programs, the City will likely achieve an even greater level of success. To this end the following actions should be considered: greater attention to volunteer recruitment and training, establishment of well-defined volunteer responsibilities and guidelines, and performance monitoring. It is also important to continue to give feedback and recognition to the volunteers.

Based on the experience of other programs, it is estimated that Alexandria could expect to generate some 10,000 to 15,000 volunteer hours, or the equivalent of some five to eight full time employees, by utilizing volunteers. Savings from these volunteer hours could be used for other necessities or the hours could be used to maintain/preserve existing open space.

Another benefit of active volunteer programs is the use of volunteer hours to fulfill certain matching requirements on grants. Valued at, say, \$15 per hour on average, the potential hours identified above could be worth \$150,000 to \$225,000 for the purposes of matching grant applications. (Note: depending on the type of service or activity, the value of labor contributions might range from \$7 to \$50 per hour).

***Corporate Funding Support***

The use of corporate resources in supporting parks & recreation activities and open space preservation initiatives is a relatively new phenomenon, and there are mixed opinions as to whether tapping corporate support is appropriate,

and if so, under what circumstances. Nonetheless, it is a potential funding resource, and one of the early tasks in the implementation of the Open Space Plan should be, in concert with others in City government, to make a final determination regarding its desirability. With this caveat, the subject of corporate funding support is discussed in the paragraphs below.

Corporate funding support could apply to both operations and acquisition; however, because of the generally short term nature of the commitment and magnitude of funding that might be generated, it is perhaps most practical to address corporate support under the operational funding heading.

Corporate support can also be either direct or indirect. Direct support, which includes sponsorships, advertising and naming rights, is typically done by the corporation itself through its marketing or public affairs functions. Direct support is discussed below. For the purposes of this discussion, indirect support refers to funding through a corporate foundation, which is discussed later.

Corporate sponsorship and advertising involve funds paid to a parks agency in return for establishing a linkage between the corporation (or in some cases, institution) and park users. This linkage can be achieved through identification of the corporation as an underwriter of an event, such as a concert. Placement of advertising materials in event brochures or advertising on scoreboards are examples of this identification strategy. The same linkage and corporate exposure can be achieved through identification of the corporate donor as a sponsor of the agency or designation of corporate products as the “official” products of the agency. Examples of the latter could range from exclusive pour rights for a soft drink company to exclusive suntan lotion for aquatic facilities. Ultimately, the value of corporate sponsorship or advertising is a function of exposure, or number of people who will receive the message. For the Alexandria Open Space Plan, a global, comprehensive approach to corporate sponsorship would make sense. By including the total recreational budget of the Recreation and Parks Department, the level of exposure would be maximized, thus maximizing the corporate income potential. Including trails and other open space assets is important to this strategy because of the high levels of utilization that can be achieved in this manner.

The second approach to tapping into corporate funding is through the sale of naming rights. Typically, this approach involves funds paid to a public agency/facility owner by a corporation in exchange for the right to affix the company’s name to the facility. This funding approach is most common for large sports venues such as stadiums and arenas; however, it is making its way into other types of facilities, and it appears likely that it is just a matter of time before naming rights reach into the public recreation domain. For example, several public recreation providers have sponsorship agreements with product and service providers, and in a related area, the Fairfax County School Board is actively investigating the issues of naming rights for its facilities. For the Alexandria Open Space Plan, trailhead signage, benches, parks and other recreational facilities could all lend themselves to this approach.

## • *USE OF PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS*

### *Applicable Goals: 1 through 15*

Public and institutional grants may be used for both acquisition of open space and funding of operations. Historically, grants have ranged in value from as little as \$100 to over \$1 million. As noted previously, the resources available for grants are subject to normal economic cycles. Currently, the amount of awards and the frequency with which grants are awarded is decreasing. State governments across the country have de-funded many open space-related grants as public coffers shrunk in response to a slowing economy. However, as the economy strengthens, the level of grant funding should bounce back, and as part of a long-term strategy, grants should continue to be useful sources of funding.

In the face of shrinking resources and increased competition for grant funding, knowledge of and experience with grants will be increasingly important for success. The retention of a full-time professional grant writer, and perhaps a development consultant, focused on open space and trails grants will be critical since specific experience and skill sets are useful in the grant writing and implementation processes. As well, success in tapping corporate and institutional funding most often involves understanding the donor's requirements and needs, and tailoring a responsive proposal that links these requirements and needs to a specific project or program.

With both public and institutional grants, separation of the recipient from government through establishment of an open space conservancy to receive the donations may, at times, also be important.

Sources of public and institutional grants that could be pursued in the implementation of the Alexandria Open Space Plan are identified below.

### *Public Grants*

Public grant programs are typically administered at the state level, and include programs that disperse funds coming from the federal government, as well as from programs that originate at the state level. A smaller number of programs are administered directly by the federal agency controlling the funding.

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund (Applies to goals: 1, 4, 5, 9, 15)

The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund is administered through the Virginia Outdoor Foundation. It is available for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities and requires a 50/50 match from localities.

#### North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants (Applies to goals 3 and 4)



North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants are disbursed by the federal government through the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Grant funds support acquisition, restoration, and enhancement projects involving wetland and wetland associated uplands. Begun in 1989, the program provides matching grants to private or public organizations or to individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Funds for the grant have been increasing gradually almost every year since its inception. In 2001, \$40 million was allocated for N.A.W.C.A. grants. Most of this money was matched on a 2:1 basis. A few were matched at 1:1. The N.A.W.C.A. small grant program provides funding up to \$50,000. An average small grant amounts to just under \$40,000. The N.A.W.C.A. large grant program provides between \$50,000 and \$1 million.

**Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (Applies to goals 1, 3 and 4)**

The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund supports environmental education and action-oriented conservation and restoration projects within Virginia's Chesapeake Bay watershed. The fund earns revenue by selling license plates with Chesapeake Bay designs on them. It disperses its earning through grants to state and local governments, as well as nonprofit entities. In 2001, the fund awarded more than \$450,000 in grants to some 75 different projects.

**Recreation Trails Program (Virginia Recreation Trails Fund)(Applies to goals 5 and 10)**

This is a small, competitive grant program that distributes monies from the ISTE/TEA21 program. It is intended to aid the construction and rehabilitation of recreational trails. The funding, which is administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is not restricted to non-motorized trails, but they are its focus. Grant monies cannot be used for planning, or for construction of "incomplete" trails (i.e., those that are designed to be a part of a future system.) Stand-alone trails, as well as connector trails, are the focuses of this funding. This is an 80/20 matching fund grant, with 20 percent of the total project costs required of the local organization. Grants range from \$10,000 to \$150,000, with typical grants amounting to \$50,000 to \$60,000. Total funds available in 2001 are \$800,000 (2000 funding totaled about \$1 million.) The grant is funded at least through 2003 and, if renewed at that time, would be funded for an additional six years. The W&OD trail in Northern Virginia has been a recipient of these funds in the past. The City of Alexandria is also a current recipient of TEA21 funding for the Eisenhower Bike Trail project, and has applied for additional funding under this program.

**Virginia Land Conservation Fund (Applies to Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9)**

The Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF) has been set up to provide matching grants to localities, public bodies, and nonprofit organizations for purchasing fee simple title to and interest in real property for land conservation purposes. Grant categories are:

- Open Spaces and Parks
- Natural Area Protection
- Historic Area Preservation
- Farmlands and Forest Preservation

In the past, grants have been used to help the Nature Conservancy acquire 458 acres of land adjacent to the Commonwealth's Cleveland Barrens Natural Areas Preserve, to help Fairfax County acquire 2.9 acres of easement at three sites in Vienna and Oakton, and to help York County acquire nine easements on the York River beach to provide a continuous pedestrian linkage/trail along the riverfront.

Historically, VLCF grants have ranged in value from \$30,000 to \$1 million, with an average gift of \$140,000. However, the Virginia State Assembly appropriated no funding for the VLCF in 2001, and the VCLF does not expect any new funding in 2002. The fund has suspended acceptance of applications for the time being.

**Transportation Enhancement Activities** (Applies to goals 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)  
Transportation enhancement grants are administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation and are available for a wide range of activities defined in 12 categories, some more specific than others. Examples of projects eligible for grant funding include trails, streetscapes (pedestrian amenities), landscaping, preservation of scenic easements, billboard removal, and restoration of historic properties related to transportation (train depot, lighthouse, etc.) This is an 80/20 matching fund grant, and allows for the local 20 percent to be in the form of cash, or donations of land, materials, or in-kind services. There is no minimum, but the agency will only pay up to \$1 million annually to a single entity. Total grant funding available in the State of Virginia for 2001 was \$18.5 million, and is expected to remain at or above this level. Typical grants total \$150,000 to \$250,000, but projects as small as \$5,000 to \$6,000 are frequently funded.

**Certified Local Government Grants** (Applies to goals 1, 2, 6, 8)  
The Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant program establishes a partnership between local governments, the federal historic preservation program, and a state's Department of Historic Resources (DHR). The program allows state DHR's, to recommend for certification local governments that have put key elements of a sound local preservation program in place in their communities. Designation as CLGs gives local governments a way to participate more formally in the state and national historic preservation programs. The City of Alexandria qualifies for CLG grants, as it is one of 24 CLG's in Virginia.

Because CLG grants use federally appropriated funds, the de-funding of CLG's is less likely than the de-funding of grants supported by the state General Assembly. Typically, Virginia's CLG budget is \$85,000. Awards range in size from \$5,000 to \$25,000, with an average award of \$15,000. Generally, there is a match of some sort, but no match is required. CLG grants may

be used for surveys of architectural or archaeological resources and historic preservation planning, among other things.

**Historic Preservation Project Grant** (Applies to goals 1, 3, 4, 6, 8)

In 2001, the General Assembly in the State of Virginia did not appropriate funds for Historic Preservation Project Grants. In the past, these grants were used to preserve/restore local historic sites and natural areas. In a “normal” year, the state legislature would award up to 75 grants ranging in value from \$5,000 to \$100,000. The Historic Alexandria Foundation received \$10,000 in 2001, and \$28,500 in 2002 from this source for two sites in the City.

**Partners for Fish and Wildlife** (Applies to goals 6, 7, 15)

These grants, administered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, are primarily given for voluntary habitat restoration projects, as they are geared more toward restoration than toward acquisition. Most recipients are private land-owners. Projects are extremely varied in nature, but can include restoration, planting, dam removal, outreach, habitat preservation and easements. This agency funds relatively few projects in urban areas. All grants are matching, and the ratio of federal to other funds ranges from 1:3 to 3:1, depending on the project and the number of partners involved. Total annual distributions range from \$1 to \$1.5 million, and the typical grant is \$50,000 to \$100,000.

**Community Development Block Grants (CBDG)** (Applies to goals 1, 7, 9)

Funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered at the local level. Focus is mainly in providing affordable housing for low and moderate-income families. Can be used for the development of recreational facilities and open space; however, since the city is dedicated to affordable housing, its limited funding available through CBDG is unlikely to be utilized for open space initiatives.

**Urban and Community Forestry Grants** (Applies to goals 11, 12, 13, 14)

These grants are administered by the U.S. Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture. The funds promote improvements to urban areas and communities through the provision of forestry resources.

**Other Public Grant Programs:** In addition to the programs identified above, there are several additional programs that could benefit Alexandria’s Open Space program. These include:

- The National Park Service’s Gateway program, which provides funding for trail markers and interpretive signs.
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation grants, that provide support for educational programs and materials such as brochures.
- Virginia Tourism Corporation matching grants, provide up to \$10,000 for the promotion of special events and educational programs.
- Urban Park and Recreational Recovery (UPARR) grants from the Fed-

eral government to improve recreation facilities in urban areas.

- Federal Brownfield/Grayfield grants to help clean up open space areas that were formerly occupied by polluting uses.

### *Institutional Grants*

#### The Virginia Land Endowment (Applies to goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 9)

The Virginia Land Endowment is an institutional grantor that uses its capital to encourage pollution prevention, open space conservation, and environmental education. In 2001, the endowment supported The Land Conservation Fund in Arlington, VA with a \$100,000 matching grant.

#### The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (Applies to goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 9)

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust was originally established to promote open space preservation in Fairfax County. It has now expanded its geographical coverage and has undertaken projects in the inner and outer suburban counties and cities of Northern Virginia, including the City of Alexandria. Activities include providing grants to support partners in land acquisition and purchase of easements, advocacy and education.

#### Various Foundations (Applies to goals 1, 4, 5, 7, 9)

There are a number of private foundations that directly and indirectly support objectives of this plan including education, land acquisition and support for general operational and administrative expenses. Some of these foundations are national in scope, but located in the region. This geographical proximity could be advantageous in working to secure funding. Examples of foundations with national coverage based in Washington, DC include: The Moriah Fund and the Wallace Genetic Foundation. Examples of funds that focus exclusively or primarily on Virginia include the Virginia Environmental Endowment, and the Mark and Catherine Winkler Foundation. The latter is based in the City of Alexandria and actively supports land acquisition and O&M expense coverage. In addition, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, which has been identified as a potential funding source, is involved in the acquisition of open space lands and conservation easements under its own name.

## C. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of Alexandria's Open Space Plan will result in the creation of a connected open space system that accomplishes several objectives. It maximizes the accessibility of the City's open spaces for all of its residents. In addition, it enhances and protects the City's significant existing open space assets, such as its waterfront, its stream valleys, and its institutional lands. And, through the creation of the Open Space Conservancy, it establishes a mechanism for adding to the City's open space assets as opportunities arise.

The provision of an outstanding open space system will serve Alexandria well, for a long time to come. It will attract new residents to the City, it will encourage those living here to remain, and it will illustrate how a dense and diverse

community can be tied together through its varied and beautiful open spaces.

<sup>8</sup> CITYgreen, a software program developed by American Forests, uses Graphic Information Systems (GIS) technology to assess the changing structure of a landscape over time, with particular emphasis on tree cover issues.



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